United Nations A/68/343

General Assembly

Distr.: General
19 August 2013

Original: English

Sixty-eighth session
Item 51 of the provisional agenda*
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

Palestine refugees' properties and their revenues

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 67/117. On 23 May 2013, the Secretary-General sent notes verbales to Israel and all other Member States, drawing their attention to the relevant provisions of resolutions 67/114 to 67/118 and requesting information by 10 July 2013 concerning any action taken or envisaged in relation to the implementation of those resolutions. Replies dated 27 June and 3 July 2013 were received from Denmark and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, responding, inter alia, to the request contained in paragraph 4 of resolution 67/117. The full text of the replies is reproduced in the present report. No information has been received from other Member States regarding the implementation of resolution 67/117.

* A/68/150.

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1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 67/117 on Palestine refugees' properties and their revenues.

2. In a note verbale dated 23 May 2013, the Secretary-General drew the attention of the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations to resolutions 67/114 to 67/118, all of 18 December 2012, with the request that the Permanent Representative inform him by 10 July 2013 of any steps that his Government had taken or envisaged taking in the implementation of the relevant provisions of the resolutions.

3. On 23 May 2013, the Secretary-General sent a note verbale to all other Member States, drawing their attention to the relevant provisions of resolutions 67/114 to 67/118 and requesting information by 10 July 2013 on any actions taken or envisaged in relation to their implementation.

4. A reply dated 30 August 2013 was received from Israel, responding to the request contained in paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 67/117. The full text of the reply reads as follows:

> Notwithstanding Israel's ongoing support for the humanitarian activities of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), it decided to vote against the resolutions, in the light of the manifestly politicized nature of UNRWA, and in line with Israel's previous voting pattern.
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> Despite a relentless and acute threat to its security, Israel has gone to great lengths to extend humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian Authority and to foster conditions for its economic growth. Throughout 2012, cooperation intensified with the relevant international community organs on the ground, resulting in the successful implementation of dozens of projects, alongside various measures aimed at alleviating economic hardships.
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> In June 2010, Israel announced that it would reform the system by which goods entered Gaza and enhance the flow of construction materials for civilian projects. Accordingly, Israel has so far approved 261 projects funded by the international community, 114 of which are UNRWA projects (UNRWA has to date completed work on 69 projects, 17 projects are still ongoing and 28 projects have not yet begun).
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> Positive cooperation between Israel and UNRWA continues on a daily basis. Over the past two years, working relations with the Agency's office in the West Bank have improved. Such cooperation includes the daily coordination of movement and access of UNRWA staff in and out of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.
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> In 2012, approximately 57,540 trucks crossed into Gaza via the Kerem Shalom terminal, compared with 53,874 trucks in 2011. This figure includes 15,859 trucks carrying construction material (aggregates, concrete, iron, etc.) for projects funded by the international community, compared with 11,352 trucks in 2011. It is important to emphasize that the capacity of the Kerem Shalom crossing exceeds current needs and it is not being fully utilized by the international community. Israel invites UNRWA to make additional use of the crossing capacity and increase the volume of its truckloads entering the Gaza Strip.

Due to heavy rainfall and flooding last winter, UNRWA approached the Israeli authorities with a request to assist the affected population with equipment, food and shelter. Israel responded by authorizing and coordinating the use of military-designated roads by UNRWA staff, in order to reach areas blocked by the flooding.

Despite the Israeli Government's efforts and notwithstanding the improved economic environment in both the West Bank and Gaza, Palestinian terrorism has continued unabated. The year 2012 saw a dramatic rise in terror attacks from the Gaza Strip, including rockets, improvised explosive devices, sniper fire and infiltration attempts. In total, there were 163 incidents (excluding rocket attacks), in comparison with 89 incidents in 2011. Similarly, there was a sharp increase in rocket attacks — both in number (211 per cent), range and accuracy.

In response to the escalating attacks from Hamas and other terror groups in the Gaza Strip, Israel launched operation "Pillar of Defense". In the months leading up to the operation, incidents along the border fence increased both in frequency and severity. Explosive devices, sniper fire, anti-tank fire and a booby-trapped tunnel, combined with the 787 rockets that had landed in Israel since the start of 2012, necessitated action to protect more than 1 million Israeli civilians living in the south.

Throughout the eight-day operation, Israel worked with international organizations and governmental representatives to provide assistance for Gaza's civilian population. Such assistance included coordinating the transfer of 150 truckloads carrying 6,000 tons of food, approving exit permits for medical treatment in Israel, as well as arranging the entry of 20 truckloads of medicines and medical supplies.

Due to the security situation, the Kerem Shalom crossing was open for three days during the operation. However, only 431 out of 540 trucks approved to enter the Gaza Strip arrived at the crossing and entered. The threat of rocket fire kept truck drivers on both sides of the border away from the crossing.

During that period, no fewer than 1,532 rockets, including long-range missiles, were fired at densely populated areas in Israel, effectively placing millions of civilians at risk. In total, six Israelis (two of whom were soldiers) were killed and over 250 were injured.

Israel supports the humanitarian mission of UNRWA and recognizes its important contribution to the welfare of the Palestinian refugees. While Israel believes that UNRWA could be an important vehicle to promote peace and stability in the region, it remains concerned with the politicization of the Agency. Israel holds that any resolution adopted regarding UNRWA must deal solely with its operations and avoid extraneous political issues that prejudice permanent status negotiations and promote the interests of one party to the conflict.

Israel favours the consolidation of all UNRWA-related resolutions and the removal of any extraneous political language.

Israel looks forward to continuing its cooperation and working relationship with UNRWA. Accordingly, Israel urges the Secretary-General

and UNRWA to consider the appropriate means for enhancing the fulfilment of the original UNRWA mandate in an accountable and responsible manner, and in the best interests of those whom it has been charged to serve.

5. A reply dated 27 June 2013 was received from Denmark, responding to the request contained in paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 67/117. The full text of the reply reads as follows:

> With regard to resolutions 67/114, paragraph 4, and 67/116, paragraph 24, Denmark has in 2013 supported the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) with a core contribution to the General Fund of DKr 90 million, as part of its continuous support to the Agency. The yearly contribution was increased in 2012 by DKr 20 million, from DKr 70 million in 2011. Furthermore, in 2012, Denmark disbursed an additional DKr 3 million for UNRWA work on digitizing the Agency's photographic archive. Together, these are expressions of support for the development mission of the Agency and represent a concrete investment in the future of Palestine refugees.
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> In addition, the Danish health-care company Novo Nordisk is working in a joint partnership agreement with the Agency to improve the health systems and fight diabetes and its associated illnesses for the Palestinian refugees.
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> With specific regard to resolution 67/116, paragraph 23, regarding special allocations for grants and scholarships for higher education to Palestine refugees, Denmark has in 2012 supported two Palestinians through the Danida Fellowship Centre.
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> Regarding resolution 67/117, in which the General Assembly urges all the parties concerned to provide the Secretary-General with any pertinent information in their possession concerning Arab property, assets and property rights in Israel, Denmark contributes through the continuous reporting on the overall political and development situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Furthermore, Denmark contributes to information and monitoring of the issues through support to human rights organizations in the field.

6. A reply dated 3 July 2013 was received from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, responding to the request contained in paragraph 5 of resolution 67/115 and paragraph 6 of resolution 67/117. The text of the reply on the topic reads as follows:

> The United Kingdom is a long-term supporter of UNRWA and was the third largest donor (after the United States and the European Union) to the General Fund in 2012. The current multi-year funding arrangement, for £106.5 million to the General Fund for 2012-2015, renews the previous five-year agreement. It represents an increase in real terms in United Kingdom support, and maintains the United Kingdom's burden share of the General Fund at approximately 8 per cent. Of the £106.5 million, £31.5 million is linked to reform and results. The United Kingdom has also provided technical support to UNRWA to help it to strengthen and monitor the efficiency and effectiveness of its education and health programmes.
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> In addition to this substantial core support, the United Kingdom is providing multi-year funding to two additional UNRWA programmes in Gaza.

The United Kingdom is supporting UNRWA in the construction of 12 schools by providing a contribution of £14.6 million from 2011-2015. The United Kingdom is also supporting UNRWA job creation programmes, which enable vulnerable refugees to meet their basic needs through the provision of temporary jobs, by providing a contribution of £14.4 million from 2011-2015.

In response to the increased burden on UNRWA caused by the crisis in Syria, the United Kingdom has provided £5 million to UNRWA to support the Agency's work with Palestinian refugees affected by the violence in Syria. This will support over 350,000 Palestinian refugees in Syria, through food parcels and relief items.

7. No information has been received from other Member States with regard to the request contained in paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 67/117.